



July 3, 2003

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of hundreds of Americans waiting to adopt children from China, I am requesting your support for H.Res. 304, a resolution to encourage the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (BCIS, formerly INS) to extend relief to U.S. citizens whose adoption process was delayed as a result of the SARS epidemic. Each year, U.S. families adopt more children from China than any other foreign country – over the previous five years, 23,094 Chinese orphans have been adopted into U.S. homes.

Paperwork issued by BCIS for an American family to adopt a child internationally is valid for 18 months. However, delays in the adoption process caused by the recent outbreak of SARS are causing numerous paperwork approvals to expire before adopting parents can travel to China to meet their children.

H.Res. 304 calls on BCIS to extend its approval for a 60-day period so that these adoptive parents can avoid the costly and cumbersome re-approval process. Due to the efforts of the U.S. and Chinese governments to meet the tremendous needs that exist in orphanages throughout China, the process has become one of the most timely and least-costly options available. These factors weigh heavily in the balance for the individuals and families who cannot afford the high administrative costs associated with domestic and other international adoptions. Desperate to build a loving home for these orphans, they are willing to do what it takes to adopt a child, but the additional expense caused by the current regulatory setback would be a tremendous burden.

I encourage you to join me in calling on BCIS to put a stop to this regulatory hassle for adoptive families. Please contact Shannon Meadors in my office (5-5401) to co-sponsor this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Northup
Member of Congress